



Fire stops with you.
The National Arson Prevention Initiative:
Six Month Report to the President

December 19, 1996
Prepared by the Federal Emergency Management Agency

Executive Summary

The National Arson Prevention Initiative (NAPI), since its creation by President Clinton on June 19, 1996, has focused its efforts on the coordination of Federal resources to support the development of community-based arson awareness and prevention activities. The following are some of the notable accomplishments of the first six months of the Initiative:

FEMA created the National Arson Prevention Clearinghouse, accessible toll-free at 1-888-603-3100. The Clearinghouse has received more than 10,000 inquiries from every State and territory, and has distributed more than 300,000 arson prevention information packets.

The Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) of the Department of Justice has made grants of \$4,600 to 586 counties in 13 targeted Southern states to enhance church surveillance efforts and to prevent arson.

The Corporation for National Service's AmeriCorps and VISTA volunteers conducted arson risk assessment surveys and provided arson prevention information in 18 communities that had experienced church arson and in 73 other potentially vulnerable communities in the six southeastern States.

FEMA distributed \$774,000 in training grants to all fifty States and the District of Columbia to enhance State and local arson investigation and prevention capabilities.

The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) authorized the use of existing Community Development Block Grant and Public Housing Assistance funds to support arson and other crime prevention strategies in communities.

The Department of Treasury's Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms (ATF) and Justice's U.S. Attorneys and Community Relations Service participated in hundreds of community meetings on arson prevention.

The Department of Education has awarded seven grants for a total of \$1.8 million for hate crime prevention activities.

The leaders of eight national fire service organizations signed the President's Partnership for Fire and Arson Protection on June 26, 1996, committing themselves and their memberships to arson prevention activities. The organizations signing the resolution include the Alliance for Fire and Emergency Management/International Society of Fire Service Instructors, the International Association of Arson Investigators, the International Association of Black Professional Fire Fighters, the International Association of Fire Chiefs, the International Association of Fire Fighters, the National Fire Protection Association, the National Association of State Fire Marshals, and the National Volunteer Fire Council.



Arson is the leading cause of property loss due to fire - it costs this nation over \$2 billion every year. It costs our communities so much more.



Introduction

Since its creation by President Clinton on June 19, 1996, the focus of the National Arson Prevention Initiative (NAPI) has been on the identification and coordination of Federal resources to support community-based grassroots efforts to prevent arson. Led by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the Initiative has been joined by

agencies and departments from across the Federal government including the Departments of Justice, Treasury, Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Education, and Agriculture, the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights and the Corporation for National Service (AmeriCorps/VISTA).

The goal of NAPI is to promote arson awareness and prevention efforts to individuals, communities, State and local officials, and the private sector nationwide through the coordination and dedication of available public and private resources to this effort. In the end, communities must take ownership of their particular arson problems and the necessary solutions. Real and lasting arson prevention can be Federally inspired; it cannot be Federally driven.

National Arson Prevention Clearinghouse

Accomplishments

The National Arson Prevention Clearinghouse was established with a toll-free number, 1-888-603-3100, on June 26, 1996. Since then, the Clearinghouse has received nearly 10,000 telephone inquiries from all fifty States, the District of Columbia, and the Caribbean territories and has filled requests for well over 300,000 packets of arson prevention information.

Fortunately for FEMA, a number of organizations have donated materials for distribution through the Clearinghouse. The Church Mutual Insurance Company provided 200,000 copies of their arson prevention brochure for distribution. The National Fire Protection Association provided 10,000 of their standard #912 for fire safety in houses of worship, and authorized the unlimited printing by FEMA of additional copies of the document. The International Association of Arson Investigators, in partnership with Grinnell Mutual Insurance, provided the camera-ready art for their arson prevention brochure to be reproduced. The National Church Arson Task Force updated the Church Threat Assessment Guide and the Clearinghouse has reproduced and distributed this document with great results.

Once someone receives a packet of prevention materials, inevitably they call the Clearinghouse seeking more sets of information. Sometimes the request may be only for 10 more, but more often the request is for multiple hundreds, sometimes thousands. Governor Sundquist of Tennessee distributed 8,000 packets during a recent statewide tour, and Governor Glendening of Maryland sent out over 5,000 to houses of worship and constituents throughout his State. The National Council of Churches, the Southern Baptist Convention, the Congress of National Black Churches, and the Universalist Unitarian Churches have all been wonderful partners in distributing Clearinghouse information. The National Council of Churches alone ordered 130,000 packets of information for their member churches.

In 1995, eight firefighters made the ultimate sacrifice for their communities in arson fires.

To bolster the Initiative and the Clearinghouse efforts, we have created a NAPI homepage on the FEMA World-Wide Web site (www.fema.gov). As a result, the Clearinghouse will be able to respond to inquiries and requests for information over the Internet, as well as by telephone. All of the brochures and pamphlets noted above, and other materials, are available to be downloaded off this web site.

Projected Activities

A Clearinghouse Outreach Strategy has been developed and finalized. This strategy will guide the efforts of the Clearinghouse staff over the next year.

FEMA will be targeting vulnerable institutions and structures, particularly schools and churches, with information on arson prevention. A brochure highlighting the resources available through the Clearinghouse and NAPI is under development and will be distributed nationally to every school and church in the nation. Community leaders, including voluntary agency representatives and local elected and appointed officials, will also be targeted.

Coordination efforts with the National League of Cities, the National Association of Counties, the International City/County Management Association, and the U.S. Conference of Mayors to promote NAPI and the Clearinghouse will continue. Local Emergency Food and Shelter Boards and their members will be contacted. As leaders in the volunteer sector with an investment and stake in their communities, they are potentially strong partners for arson prevention.

Targeted telephone outreach efforts will continue. The number of lists available, including school administrators, fire chiefs, police chiefs, elected

Arson is the leading cause of death for preschoolers. Often children die in fires they have actually set.

and appointed officials, mental health professionals, and voluntary agency directors, continues to multiply. Using arson data overlaid on a geographic information system (GIS), the Clearinghouse will maximize directed telephone outreach efforts.

Other resource clearinghouses developed by affiliated organizations will be coordinated and linked more closely together with the National

Arson Prevention Clearinghouse activities. A periodic newsletter/update on the NAPI will be developed and distributed through the Clearinghouse network. The World-Wide Web site for NAPI will be expanded and become increasingly more interactive to allow additional avenues of access and involvement by the general public in the Initiative.

Resource and Grants Coordination

Accomplishments

Awards have been made by the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) of the Department of Justice to counties for enhanced surveillance of houses of worship from the \$6 million announced by the President in July 1996. Of the 1,291 eligible counties in the 13 targeted States (Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Texas, and Virginia) only 586 county governments applied for and received their \$4,600 share. Although the majority of the grant applications indicated that counties would be using these funds to enhance their arson patrol efforts, several applicants indicated their desire to use these funds to promote arson prevention activities, like community/church watches, within their communities. Of the \$2,695,600 awarded to counties, 13.5 percent was allocated to hire part-time officers; 60.9 percent for law enforcement overtime, and 25.6 percent for other church arson prevention activities. Some of the remaining funds will be used to provide 13 arson prevention training workshops in the 13 targeted states and four additional regional arson prevention workshops outside of the southern region, and for technical assistance to state and local governments.

In June, the President announced that up to \$40 million in problem-solving partnership grants from Justice's Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) could be available to support State and local governments in their arson prevention efforts. The grants were intended to promote cooperative efforts between law enforcement and community institutions to solve local crime issues. The range of grant awards available was from \$5,000 to

\$150,000, with an average award of \$50,000. Because of the short deadlines associated with applying for this program, few communities were aware of its existence. Only one application for these funds was received. The remaining money reverted to fund traditional COPS related programs and was obligated with the close of Fiscal Year 1996.



The Department of Housing and Urban Development authorized the use of existing Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and Public Housing Assistance (PHA) funds to support arson and other crime prevention strategies in communities. PHA funds may be used for developing place-based crime prevention strategies. CDBG funds can also be used to help prevent crime or arson directed at churches or other vulnerable institutions. Because of the competing priorities at the State and local levels for the use of these funds. HUD reported that relatively modest sums of PHA or CDBG funds were reprioritized for this effort.

Efforts continue on the \$2 million in grants awarded by FEMA under the Arson Prevention Act of 1994 during Fiscal Years 1995 and 1996. The work on the nine goal areas identified in the law should conclude in Fiscal Year 1997. Resulting projects on arson case management protocols, investigative training programs, domestic violence as a cause of arson, and juvenile firesetters should serve as models to share with States and communities nationwide. Participating in these demonstration grants are the States of Arkansas, Colorado, Illinois, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada, New Mexico, and a consortium from New England that includes Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Rhode Island.

The Department of Education awarded \$1.8 million in a national grant competition under the Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Program for hate crime prevention activities. A limit of one award per state was established to achieve the maximum possible geographic diversity. Seven grants, ranging from approximately \$157,000 to \$460,000, were awarded to public and private non-profit organizations, including educational institutions, in Arizona, California, Connecticut, Mississippi, New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania. All of the projects are designed to have a broad impact within the State.

Projected Activities

At this time, there is no identified grant assistance available to State or local governments to support arson prevention efforts in Fiscal Year 1997.



Following through on a commitment made to eight of the national fire service organizations by Director Witt, FEMA will be entering into cooperative agreements with these organizations to support new or ongoing initiatives in arson prevention that contribute to NAPI. The organizations that will receive one-time awards of \$10,000 are the Alliance for Fire and Emergency Management, the International Association of Arson Investigators, the International Association

of Black Professional Fire Fighters, the International Association of Fire Chiefs, the International Association of Fire Fighters, the National Fire Protection Association, the National Association of State Fire Marshals, and the National Volunteer Fire Council.

Additional funds will be set aside for up to five additional awards of not more than \$10,000 for other fire service organizations to apply for and support NAPI through new or ongoing arson prevention efforts. Working with the Congressional Fire Services Institute, we will make the organizations aware of the funding availability. FEMA is encouraging that fire service groups join forces to maximize the resources available and the benefits of the resulting products.

Community Outreach

Accomplishments

There is probably no better example of the contribution that NAPI has made to real and lasting arson prevention than the efforts of the Corporation for National Service's AmeriCorps and VISTA volunteers. The first phase of their Community Arson Prevention Project was completed in September.

During July and August, 44 volunteers were assigned to 18 rural communities in which church arsons had occurred, and to 73 potentially vulnerable communities in Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee. In each community, volunteers conducted community risk assessments, provided information on arson and fire prevention, and introduced community relations activities aimed at developing service projects to foster racial harmony and improve communities.

Volunteers performed some 129 church threat assessments and organized over 70 community meetings on arson and fire prevention. In addition, nearly 50 in-depth community arson vulnerability assessments were initiated. Follow up to these assessments will be provided by full-year personnel.

Arson is a violent crime.

There were a number of tangible arson prevention benefits that resulted from AmeriCorps' efforts in the field. Many low-cost improvements were made on church properties to make them less vulnerable to arson. Church arson watch groups were started in southwest Georgia and South Carolina. In many states business partners pledged financial support for arson prevention efforts. Many donations of goods, services and cash were made to assist churches with arson and general fire prevention in southwest Georgia, North and South Carolina and Tennessee. All of these efforts received good local press coverage focused on fire and arson prevention issues.

As arson tends to be an outgrowth of other societal issues and stresses, the AmeriCorps and VISTA volunteers also became involved in other community issues that contribute to an environment where arson can occur. They worked in several States on unity rallies to pull disparate groups in communities together. In North Carolina, VISTA gained the commitment of WalMart to support arson prevention, as well as other VISTA activities. In Keysville, Georgia, volunteers are working with the community to address the need for low income housing. The Bank of Tchula, in Mississippi has agreed to sponsor an area youth project as the result of volunteer efforts in the community. Bi-racial community task forces are being set up in several counties in Georgia and South Carolina. In Florence, South Carolina, volunteers have been working with the Florence Area Literacy Council to addresses family literacy needs in the area. In western Tennessee, volunteers are working with community residents to develop a youth recreation program.

Projected Activities

AmeriCorps and VISTA volunteers have identified 19 service projects in the targeted States. They have begun six projects and completed six projects. The full year phase of this project officially began on September 24, 1996, with the participation of 31 VISTA volunteers. Much of the next few months will be spent completing church and community assessments. Additional volunteer support for arson prevention in other communities will be sought in 1997.

National service related organizations including Boys and Girls Clubs, Boy and Girl Scouts, Kiwanis, and Rotary clubs will all be approached by FEMA and encouraged to get involved in community-based arson prevention efforts. Creating incentives for their participation — like merit badges or other recognition programs — will be a key factor in gaining their interest and support.

Approximately 700
people die in arson fires
every year.

Public Education and Awareness

Accomplishments

Shortly after the announcement of NAPI, two public service announcements (PSAs) were made available through FEMA's Radio Network and distributed to several hundred stations. Radio has,

from the outset, appeared to be the most cost effective method for delivering arson prevention public education and awareness messages. Television PSAs were determined to not be cost effective because of development and production costs, as well as the fact that stations (because of competition with paid-for programming) elect to run such programming at their discretion — which limits audience targeting. Radio stations tend to embrace public service programming, and audience targeting tends to be easier.

In anticipation of Fire Prevention Week, FEMA employed a radio strategist to assist in the delivery of arson prevention messages to audiences nationwide. October was Crime Prevention month, so it was a great opportunity to tie crime prevention together with fire prevention messages. Fire Chiefs from across the country were personally contacted by FEMA and asked to tape radio actualities (soundbites) that would then be pitched to media markets nationwide. Without exception, the chiefs agreed to participate in radio interviews and promote the message of arson prevention. Over 40 chiefs and other fire service leaders were asked to participate. These actualities were made available on FEMA's Radio Network, as well as through the radio strategist's firm. Each day of Fire Prevention Week, different soundbites were put up on the network for stations to pull down.

Public service announcements on arson prevention were taped by Chief Dave Paulison, President of the International Association of Fire Chiefs, and distributed to over 1600 stations nationwide. These PSAs are also available on the FEMA Radio Network. In conjunction with the National Fallen Firefighters Memorial, FEMA hosted a radio press conference on arson prevention with Chief Charlie Dickinson from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Chief Dickinson was the keynote speaker at the memorial. Three members of his department were lost in a tragic arson fire in 1995. A total of eight firefighters recognized at the memorial died in arson fires. Chief Dickinson did a wonderful job promoting arson prevention and supporting NAPI.

In addition to promoting arson prevention through the radio, FEMA has authored and/or placed articles in a number of constituency periodicals and

newsletters. Each of the major fire service organizations has devoted some time to NAPI in their newsletters, with some dedicating the entire publication to arson prevention. The major officials' organizations, like the National League of Cities and the International City/County Management Association, have continued to include news of the Initiative and arson prevention in their newsletters and publications.



Projected Activities

A strategy for a national “grassroots” public education campaign is under development. Involving interested private sector parties, including the insurance industry, will be a key element of this effort. At least one national spokesperson will be pursued to promote arson prevention. Television, including talk show programming, will likely figure into this strategy.

Outreach to promote arson prevention messages will be oriented around current events to make the media and the public aware of the Initiative, as well as the Clearinghouse and its resources. FEMA Headquarters and Regional offices will capitalize on the attention paid to wildfires when they occur and use it as an opportunity, and will track the occurrence of arson by monitoring their news clippings and target their messages accordingly to those communities.

FEMA will be developing generic articles for placement in periodicals and newspapers. We will also be identifying and producing some broad, general message radio actualities to support the efforts of the regional offices to capitalize on current events.

Greater emphasis will be placed on tie-ins with other awareness activities. As an example, for youth service day in April, we will focus on juvenile firesetting-related issues and promote appropriate messages. In May, we will focus more generally on arson during the insurance industry-sponsored arson awareness week.

Training Programs Coordination

Accomplishments

In June 1996, the President announced the release of \$774,000 in training grants from FEMA's United States Fire Administration to enhance State and

Juvenile firesetters
account for more than 50%
of arson cases.

local arson investigation and prevention capabilities. Every State received a minimum award of \$12,000, with targeted States in the Southeast receiving a total award of \$26,000.

Although the majority of the training funds within the States will be expended in the delivery of National Fire Academy (NFA) courses by the State Fire Training organization, several States have elected to support the training of Statewide and regional arson task forces with these grants. In some States, the law enforcement training organization has the lead for arson training and is therefore administering the funding.

Given that demand for resident NFA courses has historically exceeded supply — with as many as 13 applications for every available class position — the increased availability afforded through these grant awards has been widely heralded. Further, because of the flexibility allowed in these awards, States are able to prioritize and offer prevention training for communities as an alternative to solely fire service deliveries. The performance period for FEMA's Arson Training Grant program extends through September 30, 1997.

Through other scheduled resident, regional, and direct deliveries by NFA, an estimated 2500 students will receive arson investigation training by the end of the fiscal year. To further expand the reach of these training programs, nearly 400 copies of NFA course materials have been distributed to State Fire Training offices to be used as part of a lending library.

Members of the International Association of Arson Investigators (IAAI) continue to deliver arson prevention workshops nationwide. The Clearinghouse has been coordinating requests for this type of workshop with the IAAI. The association averages nearly one workshop delivery every other working day, and is absorbing the delivery costs for this effort. Utilizing FEMA's Emergency Education Network, the IAAI delivered their arson prevention workshop by satellite. This broadcast was picked up by several hundred cable companies and reaches an audience estimated to be in excess of 100,000 viewers.

The Federal agencies have developed a matrix of available Federal training resources. This matrix categorizes the variety of general and specific arson and fire prevention and investigation course materials available through the FEMA and the other Federal agencies.

Projected Activities

At the close of Fiscal Year 1996, some funding remained unobligated from the \$6 million announced by the President for enhanced surveillance of houses of worship. BJA entered into a cooperative agreement with the National Sheriffs' Association to offer interdisciplinary training workshops in church arson prevention to the 13 targeted Southern States. Four additional regional workshops outside of the Southern region will also be sponsored through this cooperative agreement. Realistically, the timeframe for putting on these conferences is probably early Summer to late Fall.

These training workshops must and will be planned and conducted in close coordination with the needs identified by the Governor of each State. It will be at the discretion of each State to determine whether or not such a training conference is necessary. FEMA will work closely with the National Sheriffs' Association on the execution of these conferences.

To assist States in making such a decision, they will be able to review the matrix of arson prevention training modules and courses that could be delivered as part of these training conferences. States could identify their priority prevention training needs and the conference agenda could be customized to address these key areas. We are encouraging the Governors' offices to take an active role in this effort, and will involve the Southern Governors's Association in strategy and planning discussions.

Exemplary Practices

Accomplishments

The Governors in the South have done a tremendous job elevating the issue of arson and embracing and promoting prevention strategies. Virtually every State in the South has an active and engaged Statewide Arson Task Force that the Governor supports. States throughout the country have statewide and regional task forces to accomplish the same purpose. Oftentimes the orientation of these task forces is on the investigation and prosecution of arsonists, however prevention has more and more become an issue they are addressing.



One in every four fires is
arson.

Arson is the second leading
cause of death due to fire.

In North Carolina, Governor Hunt has spearheaded a "church watch" program. North Carolina's Prison Industries has developed visible, identifiable watch signs that have neighborhood watch overtones. Governor Sundquist has travelled throughout the State of Tennessee with his task force and promoted arson prevention as a key priority. Governor Beasley in South Carolina has taken steps that have resulted in a dramatic increase in arrests and prosecutions for arson.

Governor Allen has hosted series of statewide conferences on arson prevention in which FEMA has participated.

At the local level, from Florence, South Carolina, to Miami, Florida, to Detroit, Michigan, Phoenix, Arizona, and Rochester, New York, there are effective arson prevention programs in place to address church security and fire safety and juvenile firesetter issues. Prevention is certainly taking hold at the local level.

Projected Activities

Some outstanding arson prevention programs have been put in place all over the country. Over the next few months, FEMA will be compiling these successful practices in arson prevention. We will be collecting these examples through FEMA's World-Wide Web site, as well as through the Clearinghouse. In addition to making this information available on-line, we envision a compendium of exemplary practices in arson prevention being developed and distributed. On-line "town hall"-type meetings are also planned for the future to put arson prevention practitioners in touch with each other to discuss effective programs and approaches. In addition to these efforts, we would like to establish some sort of acknowledgement and recognition program to motivate arson prevention efforts.

Community Arson Prevention Coalition Pilots

Accomplishments

FEMA secured the services and support of Message Concepts, Incorporated, an organization possessing unique expertise in community organizing to develop a strategy for inspiring and motivating community coalitions for arson prevention. The company principals have been involved in an array of

grassroots activities, including Hands Across America, USA for Africa, and the 1996 Olympic Torch relay and the Flair Across America tour.

A strategic plan entitled “Partnerships for Arson Awareness and Prevention” has been developed as an interim use guide. This plan should provide a general framework for promoting “cause”-oriented coalitions at the grassroots level.

Nationally, only 2-4% of arson cases are “closed by conviction”.

Projected Activities

A key component of NAPI is inspiring and supporting grassroots arson prevention efforts. Even as FEMA identifies ongoing successful arson prevention efforts, we are receiving calls through the Clearinghouse from communities of every size asking for guidance on how to establish arson prevention programs. In response to these requests, and also in recognition of the fact that real, lasting prevention takes place at the community level, not the Federal level, FEMA is initiating a pilot community action program for arson prevention in three communities to develop model practices that can be emulated or replicated across the country.

Through this effort, we intend to design and implement a process for building community-based coalitions to target arson awareness and prevention. Based upon this experience, we plan to develop “community action” guidance for the preparation and community acceptance of a community arson prevention strategy. As part of this effort, we will devise a method for the evaluation and measurement of the short-term and long-term success of these community arson prevention strategies and their implementation.

FEMA has worked closely with the Governors and other key State and local officials, as well as appropriate constituency organizations, to select these pilot communities. These communities were selected based upon several factors including: the identified arson problem, population size (varied), fire and law enforcement community involvement, church and voluntary sector leadership in the community, corporate community strength and interest, State and local officials support and involvement, and the available media market for public education.

FEMA will coordinate with States as part of our effort to initiate arson prevention activities in these pilot communities. Lessons learned from these pilot programs will translate into model practices that can then be transferred to communities all over the country. These demonstration projects will



become the basis of a “national” grassroots arson prevention effort. Because of the leadership demonstrated by the Southern Governors on this issue, these pilot communities were selected from among the States in the standard Federal Region IV. The three pilot arson prevention coalition communities are: Nashville, Tennessee; Charlotte, North Carolina; and Macon, Georgia.

Work with these pilot communities will begin in early 1997. An \$800,000 contract for technical assistance that BJA has in place will be available to assist in the community arson prevention coalition efforts. The funds for this contract were part of the unexpended \$6 million grant monies.

Intervention and Interdiction Efforts

Accomplishments

One of the key factors contributing to the arson problem in this country is the role of juvenile firesetters. Arson is the number one crime committed by juveniles, and more than 50% of the individuals apprehended or identified as responsible for setting fires are juveniles 18 years or younger.

FEMA has a juvenile firesetter workshop that runs 2-1/2 days and is intended for a practitioner-based audience (school administrators, mental health professionals, fire service, law enforcement). Each year, USFA delivers 6-8 of these workshops. Plans for Fiscal Year 1997 call for 18 deliveries, many of which will be targeted to high-risk areas. Demand for these workshops has always exceeded supply, and the issue of juvenile firesetters does not diminish. In fact, on December 12, 1996, the “Leeza” television talk show featured the problem of juvenile firesetting and had mental health professionals on hand to provide guidance. The Clearinghouse phone number was emphasized during the program.

FEMA has reached out to the major national educational associations and the national crime prevention organizations on the issue of juvenile firesetting and has met with strong interest and support for efforts focused on this problem.

Projected Activities

Contingent upon the availability of funding in Fiscal Year 1997, FEMA will develop a 4-hour awareness workshop for the general community on the

signs and symptoms of juvenile firesetters. This workshop will be easily transportable and deliverable to a wide variety of groups. FEMA will also develop a more practitioner-oriented, 8-hour workshop on juvenile firesetters that could be offered as part of a professional development seminar. A one-day time commitment is about the most we should expect for someone to devote to an issue like this. We are also reviewing the need and effectiveness of developing an early elementary curriculum in juvenile firesetting for traditional (schools) and non-traditional (Head Start, etc.) educational outlets. We are also evaluating the necessity for updating their current workshop delivery.

Efforts to involve and include the educational community, crime prevention community, mental health, and social services communities will be stepped up as this effort progresses.

Constituency Relations

Accomplishments

FEMA is continuing to coordinate efforts to prevent arson nationally by working with a wide range of constituents in the public and private sector. We have met with and remain constantly in contact with the national fire service organizations. Similarly, we continue to interact and coordinate with the law enforcement groups. The church and voluntary groups and crime prevention organizations are a wonderful resource that we continue to tap to get the arson prevention message out. We continue to be impressed and encouraged by the ongoing interest and involvement of the Governors in this issue, and will continue to work closely with the National Governors' Association and Southern Governors' Association as the Initiative progresses.

As part of the NAPI, the other Federal agencies continue to reach out to communities — generally on issues related specifically to the church burnings. More than one hundred community outreach meetings have occurred as the result of the U.S. Attorneys Task Forces in States, and outreach efforts by the ATF and Justice's Community Relations Service. The Department of Agriculture continues to participate in the weekly NAPI Working group meetings and deal with their field constituency on the issues of arson prevention. HUD's National Rebuilding Initiative Workshops have provided an excellent platform for the discussion of arson prevention with an audience that understands firsthand its importance — those that have already lost something to arson.

There are over 500,000
fires attributed to arson
every year.

The National Arson Prevention Clearinghouse can be reached toll free 1-888-603-3100, or information is available at our Website www.fema.gov.

Projected Activities

Participation in national conferences and large constituency gatherings will continue to be a priority, as will supporting Governors in their statewide arson prevention efforts. FEMA's interactions with the major national organizations will be focused on performance and product partnerships. It's not enough to just express a commitment to work together, we need to

identify and pursue cooperatively specific arson prevention projects and results. This will emphasize for these constituency organizations the importance we place on their partnership and participation.

Interagency Coordination

Accomplishments

FEMA chairs a weekly interagency working group meeting on NAPI. Justice's Civil Rights Division, Community Relations Service, and Bureau of Justice Assistance regularly attend. ATF is also a key player in these meetings. HUD and Agriculture round out the working group membership. The Corporation for National Service has been a strong, but largely silent, partner in these weekly proceedings. The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights and the Department of Education have also participated in the working group. The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights has shared detailed information with the group on the series of community forums conducted by its State Advisory Committees on the Burning of African American Churches and Perception of Race Relations in affected Southern states.

By and large the working group uses the weekly meeting to share information about upcoming events and decisions, as well as to chart out goals for future interagency efforts. All of these discussions and activities are shared with the National Church Arson Task Force.

Projected Activities

It is anticipated that the working group will continue to meet with the same frequency in order to coordinate such major activities as the training conferences and the community arson prevention coalition pilots. Because of sensitivities expressed by the Southern Governors' Association related to their community activities, the continued participation of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights will be critical in the next year.

Future of the Initiative

The recent series of tragic church burnings and desecrations have elevated in the public's consciousness the serious nature of the arson problem in this country. The church burnings also elevated the issue of arson prevention to a new level of attention within government — the President's!



As the result of the National Arson Prevention Initiative, a framework for a program of arson awareness and prevention within FEMA and among the various Federal agencies has been created. NAPI should be viewed as a long-term, umbrella initiative for the arson prevention programs that existed before it, all those that have resulted from the initiative, and all of those that will follow.

Fire and arson prevention are not just the dominion of the fire service. These are issues that local officials, teachers, police officers, social workers, health care workers, church leaders, and United Way volunteers should all be thinking about. Arson is a problem that will not solve itself or be solved by a segment of the population.

It will take an entire community of action to make a difference in arson. The entire community has been targeted in this Initiative — and the entire community is responding.